

# Oklahoma finally paying overdue storm bills

The Oklahoman Editorial | Published: May 9, 2012 Oklahoman  1

[Oklahoma](#) turned 100 years old on Nov. 16, 2007. About a month later, an ice storm of historic proportions hit much of the state. To take this history lesson forward, it took another four-plus years for local governments to be repaid for their part in coping with the calamity.

And to take this into the future, the state needs a better plan for dealing with natural disasters, of which Oklahoma history is unfortunately full.

A \$34.1 million supplemental appropriation will help catch up with a backlog of bills due to local governments for disaster relief. The most overdue of these bills dates to February 2007.

The appropriation is designed to reimburse cities, counties, utilities and other jurisdictions. Most disaster assistance is paid by the federal government, but the portion the state was supposed to cover has been going unpaid.

Here's some more history: For nearly 60 years, Oklahoma has had more officially declared disasters than any state other than [Texas](#) and [California](#), each of which covers far more territory. Since 2007, Oklahoma has been the national leader in declared disasters.

Yet the state has an inadequate plan for dealing with future disasters. [Bixby City Manager Doug Enevoldsen](#), who's also worked in state government, told the [Tulsa World's Wayne Greene](#) that it's time to do better. He suggests a dedicated revenue source for an emergency fund with an annual appropriation of \$4 million.

"Logic suggests and experience suggests that there's going to be additional disasters in the future," Enevoldsen said, "and wouldn't it be prudent to prepare for that in advance by beginning to provide for some additional dollars?"

Indeed it would. Not only logic but a century's worth of history suggests that the state will be paying for disaster assistance one way or another. It should at least be paying for it when the bill comes due — not five years later.

Read more: <http://newsok.com/oklahoma-finally-paying-overdue-storm-bills/article/3673685#ixzz1uNWB7Iql>